Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, May 25, 2012

Note from Commissioner Gist:

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5. Virtual Learning Math Modules trainings scheduled for June 18, June 21

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9. RIDE offers training for educators to serve as coaches with 2nd- and 3rd-year teachers

10. RIDE to post, distribute new guidebooks on the Rhode Island Model for Educator Evaluation

11. RIDE sets timeline for phase in of Single Sign-On user accounts

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13. Roster Verification process begins **Tuesday** (May 29)

14. Process for paying employer contribution to Defined Contribution teachers' retirement plans defined

From the U.S. Department of Education:

15. Department announces Race to the Top competition for districts
16. Department posts May issue of Superintendent Update

Action Item Calendar

Today (May 25): Professional Learning Community grant applications due
Today (May 25): Deadline for data managers/IT directors to resolve TCS errors
June 1: Educator Talent Pool packets submission deadline
June 1: District Teacher of the Year application deadline
June 5: Deadline for teachers to sign off on TCS data
June 8: Data collection for PARCC Technology Readiness Tool due
June 13: Preliminary reports on Early Invention Services due
June 13: Deadline for homeless-education data filing
June 15: Deadline for forming School Data Leadership Teams
June 22: Deadline for principals to sign off on TCS data
June 29: Final reports on Early Intervention Services due
June 30: Schools and districts submit final personnel assignments
July 15: Deadline for final reporting of evaluation ratings

Note from Commissioner Gist:

1. **Secretary Duncan, national union presidents sign vision statement on future of teaching profession**

I had the privilege this week of spending time with two of our statewide union leaders – Frank Flynn, president of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals, and Larry Purtill, president of the National Education Association – Rhode Island – at a two-day 2012 Labor Management Conference that the U.S. Department of Education convened. District teams including union leaders and management from Providence and Woonsocket also participated in the conference, as did Tim Duffy, from the Rhode Island Association of School Committees, and Mary Ann Snider, Chief of Educator Excellence and Instructional Effectiveness at RIDE. We enjoyed the opportunity to show our colleagues from around the country some of the major initiatives on which labor and management have worked in partnership in Rhode Island, including educator evaluations, Race to the Top, the Innovation Powered by Technology Model School grant, and induction and mentoring for beginning teachers. One highlight of the conference was the adoption of a joint vision statement, "Transforming the Teaching Profession," signed by Secretary Duncan, the national presidents of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, and others. The document specifies some "elements of a transformed profession," including many of the initiatives we are implementing in Rhode Island. These elements include a "high bar for entering the profession" and evaluations based on "measures of student academic growth, evidence from classroom and school practice, and contributions to colleagues and the school community." The Department of Education has posted the statement on its website, here:

http://www2.ed.gov/documents/labor-management-collaboration/2012-shared-vision.pdf

I look forward to continuing our partnerships in Rhode Island as we work together to make our schools America's best.

From RIDE:

2.   RIDE offers professional development on the Common Core State Standards

Please see the following announcement from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

>To support our transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), educators across Rhode Island are investing time to dig deep into the standards themselves and build their understanding of the meaning of the standards. To help educators in this effort, we are pleased to be able to offer professional development opportunities regarding the big shifts within the CCSS in English language arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics:
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>ELA/literacy:
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>Text Complexity Session
>Text Dependent Questions Session
>
>Mathematics:
>
>Common Core State Standards for Mathematics: Implementation of Content and Practice
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>Registration for this professional development will be through eRIDE only. For questions regarding the ELA/literacy professional development, please contact, Diane Girard, diane.girard@ride.ri.gov or Colleen O'Brien, colleen.obrien@ride.ri.gov, and for questions regarding the mathematics professional development, please contact Susan Pagliaro, susan.pagliaro@ride.ri.gov or Patty Carnevale, patricia.carnevale@ride.ri.gov.

Please see the following announcements from our Office of Multiple Pathways:

3.   All-inclusive device vendor selected

>A vendor has been selected for the All Inclusive Device Solution Master Price Agreement (MPA). This solution is a comprehensive package that includes a device, maintenance, and service, as well as extensive professional development. The details are now being processed by our Legal Office and the Department of Administration (DOA). The DOA will be making a formal announcement shortly. Protocol prohibits us from preceding the DOA announcement, but we wanted to inform you that a decision has been made and that the information and details will be provided as soon as they are available.

4.   Technology-literacy assessment meeting scheduled for Thursday

The second window for assessing 8th-grade technology literacy is now closed. We will be hosting a meeting on **Thursday** (May 31), in Room 501 at RIDE, from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the new reporting format and results. Testing administrators are encouraged to attend the meeting.

5. **Virtual Learning Math Modules trainings scheduled for June 18, June 21**

   The pilot phase of the Virtual Learning Math Modules (VLMM) project is underway, and we are looking forward to the next steps, including our summer and fall scale-up phases. Two training sessions have been scheduled to help prepare the local school VLMM team members wishing to utilize the modules during their summer programs. The training sessions have been scheduled for Monday, June 18, and Thursday, June 21. Those who have expressed an interest in incorporating VLMM into summer programming have been notified of the trainings. Additional training sessions will be scheduled toward the end of the summer for those ready to implement the VLMM in the fall. Please contact Stacy Mello (stacy.mello@ride.ri.gov) to be placed on the contact list.

6. **Regents seek comment on Virtual Learning Regulations; General Assembly considers Virtual Learning bill**

   On May 3, the Board of Regents approved the Rhode Island Virtual Learning Regulations for public comment. All interested parties are invited to submit written comments concerning the proposed regulation by **June 8**, to Angela Teixeira, at the R.I. Department of Education, 255 Westminster St., Providence 02903, or to Angela.Teixeira@ride.ri.gov, or by calling Angela Teixeira, at 222-8435.

   The Statewide Virtual Education Bill (H7126A / S2276A) has moved through committee in both the House and Senate and will be submitted for vote before the close of this session. The purpose of this bill – to provide access to high-quality, rigorous, and relevant online learning opportunities for all of Rhode Island public school students – fully supports Regents' Virtual Learning Regulations. The bill is posted at:

   http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/billtext12/housetext12/housetext12.html - (H7126A).

7. **Virtual Learning certification course deadline is June 21**

   We would like to share information about an opportunity at Rhode Island College this summer for educators to earn a certificate in blended or hybrid teaching and learning. Registration deadline is June 21. Details and course information can be found at the following address:

   http://www.ric.edu/fctl/certificateprogram.php

8. **RIDE to offer grant to support 10 high schools in developing local common performance assessments**

RIDE is pleased to announce a new project that will provide selected schools with significant professional development and inclusion in a highly successful professional learning community to develop local common performance assessments. This opportunity is being made possible through funding by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation and the Rhode Island Foundation.

This project will provide support for a cohort of 10 high schools to participate in the coming (2012-13) school year. There is sufficient funding for a few of the selected schools to include their middle-school colleagues in this project; interested high-school or middle-school teams should submit one application. School teams will be trained in the processes of assessment writing, validation, scoring, and evaluation of the process. The funding provides support for a second cohort of schools for the 2013-14 school year.

The application process will be available on Friday (June 1) on the Office of Multiple Pathways page on the RIDE website, with applications due **June 21**. During the summer, district teams will be provided with materials needed to prepare for work to begin in early September. Details will be available once the schools have been selected.

Selection of high schools and middle-school and high-school teams will be based on evidence of commitment to consistently engage in the development, implementation, and scoring process. Applications must include a minimum of two teachers to work in two different content areas (for a total of four teachers) of the district's choice.

If you have any questions, please contact Rosemary.Burns@ride.ri.gov.

9. **RIDE offers training for educators to serve as coaches with 2nd- and 3rd-year teachers**

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

We are excited that the response to our induction survey is continuing to grow. Currently, 61 percent of beginning teachers and 41 percent of site administrators have completed the survey. We would appreciate your support in encouraging your beginning teachers and building principals who are part of the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Induction Program this year to complete the survey. The feedback from the survey is critical, as it will inform further development of the program as well as help us determine how successful the program has been within each LEA. The survey will remain open through this weekend and will close at noon on **Tuesday** (May 28).

Thank you once again for allowing your best educators to apply to become Induction Coaches. We have had the opportunity to interview some incredibly talented educators for the upcoming school year. Currently, we are in the process of checking references and making our final decisions.

In an attempt to build further capacity within the LEAs, we are opening up the Option 2 choice on the applications once again. We believe there may have been some confusion regarding the Option 2 opportunity. Below we have provided a more descriptive outline of Option 2.

Option 2 is an opportunity to have educators in LEAs receive the same training that the Induction Coaches receive, in order to support 2nd- or 3rd-year teachers and teachers on an improvement plan or to enhance their coaching skills if they are already in coaching roles.

Interested educators must go through the same application process as Induction Coaches went through to ensure that they have the skills, characteristics, and habits of mind necessary to be successful in our coaching program. For those selected to participate in training, the following commitments are required, as space is limited:

- RIDE provides the training free of charge
- the LEA ensures that the candidate can attend all trainings (August 21-22, October 15-16, December 17-18, and March 4-5)
- the LEA ensures that the candidate can attend a coaching forum once per month
- the LEA ensures that the candidate has the opportunity to work with at least one teacher in a coaching situation for at least 90 minutes per week.

Please pass this information to educators in your LEA to whom you would like to afford this opportunity. Application packets can be accessed at:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/DOCS/mentoring/Full_Release-Induction_Coach_Application.pdf .

They will need to be returned by **June 8**. Incomplete packets will not be accepted.

As always, if you have any questions or feedback, do not hesitate to contact Hilda or Donna:

Hilda Potrzeba, at hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov or 222-8891
Donna Okrasinski, at donna.okrasinski@ride.ri.gov or 222-8982

10. **RIDE to post, distribute new guidebooks on the Rhode Island Model for Educator Evaluation**

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

New guidebooks on the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation and Support System will be posted on the RIDE website beginning next Friday, June 1. Two distinct guidebooks have been developed, one for the teacher model and a second for the building-administrator model. In addition to the electronic versions, RIDE will begin to deliver hard copies of both guidebooks to participating LEAs beginning early next month.

We are excited to share these new resources with the field and would like to thank all of the Rhode Island educators who helped shape both the revised model and the new guidebooks. Similar to the original guidebooks, the new versions will include detailed

guidance about the Rhode Island Model, and we hope you find them to be useful tools as you prepare for full implementation.

11. **RIDE sets timeline for phase in of Single Sign-On user accounts**

Please see this notice from our Office of Network and Information Systems:

In order to minimize the impact on the LEAs of creating new Single Sign-On user accounts for their certified staff, RIDE will be migrating account information from the existing RICERT system. Prior to the migration process, it is critical that we have valid e-mail addresses for the purpose of notifying all the educators in the state about the new Single Sign-On system and the change to the log-in process. RIDE will soon be launching a web-based e-mail-address verification process that will ask the user to provide two e-mail addresses – one for work-related notification and one for nonwork-related notification. So that you are informed as to how we will be reaching out to your teachers, we have included in this memo our process and timeline that will ensure that we are able to contact the maximum amount of educators in the state.

Upcoming Timelines:

- June 1 through June 3: RIDE will e-mail educators information about the new Single Sign-On Portal, with a link to the E-mail Validation application.
- June 1 through August 1: E-mail Validation Application will be open so that educators can validate their e-mail addresses. Each educator will be asked to verify or provide two e-mail addresses – one for work-related notification and one for nonwork-related notification (such as certification notifications).
- July 1: RIDE will send a letter in the postal mail to the home address on file in our certification database to any educator who has not validated her or his e-mail addresses. The content in the letter will be the same as the original e-mail.
- Mid-August: RIDE will send an e-mail with their new Single Sign-On ID and temporary password to all the educators who have validated their e-mail address.
- Mid-August: RIDE will be conducting training for the designated Single Sign-On Administrator in each LEA. The training will include how to use the Single Sign-On system to add, create, and remove accounts and to assign access to the applications available through the Single Sign-On portal.

Please contact Ed Giroux, at ed.giroux@ride.ri.gov, with any questions.

12. **PARCC Readiness inventory assessment ends June 8**

Please see this message from our Office of Data, Analysis, and Research:

The device inventory for PARCC Readiness is in process and ends on June 8. The PARCC test architects will use this baseline inventory as they design the tests. LEAs should use this inventory for device-purchase decisions, including how many devices will be needed to administer the PARCC test and where these devices will be needed. There is no other

way of determining the technology readiness for the PARRC test. Each LEA Readiness Tool user should have logon information and can access the tool, at:

https://www.techreadiness.net/cas/login?service=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.techreadiness.net%2Freadiness-core-webapp%2Fj_spring_cas_security_check&renew=true

Please follow this link – http://www.ride.ri.gov/Division-EEIE/transition.aspx *(Click on New Statewide Assessment: PARCC and PARCC Device Inventory Status by LEA)* – to view your LEA inventory results to date, and contact Michael Ferry if you need assistance, at michael.ferry@ride.ri.gov or 222-8258.

13. **Roster Verification process begins Tuesday (May 29)**

Please see this message from our Office of Data, Analysis, and Research:

Roster Verification (RV) is the process through which teachers and principals verify which students are in which teachers' classes. This process is critical in ensuring the accuracy of teacher-course-student (TCS) data, which will be used in the new IMS, EPSS, and GMV data systems being developed under Race to the Top, as well as for educator evaluations. We appreciate your help in ensuring that your principals and teachers participate in the appropriate trainings and are prepared for the RV.

Roster Verification for teachers will begin on **Tuesday** (May 29) and must be completed by **June 5**. Please ensure that principals are monitoring teacher progress on signing off on their rosters. In addition, RIDE has developed training materials for principals and teachers, which are available at www.ride.ri.gov/29.

Upcoming Roster Verification Dates:

- Teacher Roster Verification and Sign-Off: **Tuesday** (May 29) – Tuesday, June 5
- Principal Schoolwide Roster Sign-off: Wednesday, June 6 – Friday, June 22

If teachers need their login information, please ask that they send an e-mail to rosterverification@ride.ri.gov and that they include the last four digits of their SSN in the e-mail. Teachers can also reach us at 222-8400 to obtain their login information.

14. **Process for paying employer contribution to Defined Contribution teachers' retirement plans defined**

Please see this notice from our Finance Office:

After discussions with personnel from TIAA-CREF and representatives from the RIASBO Executive Board, Rhode Island has defined the process for paying the "employer" contribution for the Defined Contribution plan for teachers that will open with the first full pay period after July 1. LEAs will be required to initially pay the full 1-percent Defined Contribution "employer" share directly to TIAA-CREF. RIDE will then reimburse LEAs for the state 40-percent share of the Defined Contribution payment. Note that, as with the Defined Benefit plan, the state contributions for the Defined Contribution plan

will be only for non-federally funded positions. Also, only the Defined Contribution required 1-percent contribution will be split between the state and LEAs. The 2-percent supplemental contribution for positions not covered by Social Security is entirely the responsibility of the LEA and is not shared by the state.

There will be a lag in the reimbursement, as LEAs will make the payments to TIAA-CREF every time they run a payroll, but RIDE will reimburse LEAs monthly based on the payroll data supplied to RIDE from the Employees Retirement System of Rhode Island. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the state' share of teachers' retirement, please contact William Trimble, our Senior Finance Officer, at william.trimble@ride.ri.gov.

Separately, some LEAs have expressed a concern regarding the TIAA-CREF 3-day data file in advance of funding requirement. TIAA-CREF has informed us that it will allow an exception for any employers to provide remittance data 48 hours in advance. A written notification from each employer that desires the exception is required. LEAs should send an e-mail to stateofrhodeisland@tiaa-cref.org requesting an exception. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your TIAA-CREF representative.

From the U.S. Department of Education:

15. **Department announces Race to the Top competition for districts**

Secretary Duncan and the Department of Education announced a new Race to the Top District competition this week, one that is aimed squarely at the classroom level with a focus on the relationship between teachers and students.

The proposed competition offers nearly $400 million in grants and invites school districts to create plans for individualized classroom instruction aimed at closing achievement gaps and preparing each student for college and career.

Read more about and comment on the proposal.

16. **Department posts May issue of Superintendent Update**

The latest issue of the Superintendent Update is now online. This issue provides a recap of the recently held Superintendent Call and provides information the publication of proposed criteria for next Race to the Top district-level competition.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

> http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx